

## CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) In a system comprising:

a root entity, the root entity maintaining a root certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to each of a first participant and a second participant, ~~the root entity further maintaining a central repository;~~

the first participant maintaining a first certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a first customer;

the second participant maintaining a second certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a second customer;

a method for providing authorization services, said method comprising:

generating by the second customer an authorization request to confirm the authority of an individual to act on behalf of the first customer, wherein the first customer has contacted the second customer but has not sent a digital signature to the second customer;

transmitting the authorization request from the second customer to the second participant;

transmitting the authorization request from the second participant to the first participant;

retrieving at the first participant information concerning the authority of the individual to act on behalf of the first customer and at least one or more rules rule for responding to the authorization request;

generating by the first participant an authorization response using the retrieved information and rules;

transmitting the response from the first participant to the second participant; and

transmitting the response from the second participant to the second customer.

2 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the authorization request is a dynamic request as to whether the individual is authorized to perform a certain act or undertake a particular transaction.

3 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the authorization request is a static request for an attribute of a role associated with the individual.

4 (canceled)

5 (original) The method of claim 1, wherein access controls are implemented that limit the ability of the second customer to obtain a message format for the authorization request.

6 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~definition~~ information pertaining to definitions of attributes is used in preparing the authorization response.

7 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~mapping~~ information pertaining to mapping terminology from the second customer to the first customer is used in preparing the authorization response.

8 (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the mapping information comprises dynamic mapping information.

9 (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the authorization request seeks confirmation that the individual is authorized to purchase goods on behalf of the first customer.

10 (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1,~~ In a system comprising:  
a root entity, the root entity maintaining a root certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to each of a first participant and a second participant;  
the first participant maintaining a first certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a first customer;  
the second participant maintaining a second certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a second customer;  
a method for providing authorization services, said method comprising:  
generating by the second customer an authorization request to confirm the authority of an individual to act on behalf of the first customer, wherein the first customer has contacted the second customer but has not sent a digital signature to the second customer;  
transmitting the authorization request from the second customer to the second participant;  
transmitting the authorization request from the second participant to the first participant;  
retrieving at the first participant information concerning the authority of the individual to act on behalf of the first customer and at least one rule for responding to the authorization request;

generating by the first participant an authorization response using the retrieved information and rules;

transmitting the response from the first participant to the second participant; and

transmitting the response from the second participant to the second customer;

wherein the authorization request is bundled with a certificate validation request for ~~the individual's~~ a digital certificate of the first customer.

11 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the first participant checks the validity of the ~~first customer's~~ digital certificate of the first customer.

12 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the response indicates the status of the ~~first customer's~~ digital certificate of the first customer.

13 (currently amended) A method for establishing an authorization service, said method comprising:

defining a proposed authorization service for confirming the authority of individuals and/or computers to transact on behalf of customers;

presenting the proposed authorization service to a policy management authority by sending an electronic communication to the policy management authority, wherein the proposed authorization service is developed by a participant and approved by the policy management authority before being offered to ~~a customer~~ customers;

receiving approval of the proposed authorization service from the policy management authority via an electronic communication, whereby the proposed authorization service becomes an approved authorization service; and

implementing the approved authorization service.

14 (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the proposed authorization service comprises a messaging specification and implementation rules.

15 (currently amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the proposed authorization service is jointly developed by a customer and ~~its~~ a participant of the customer.

16 (canceled)

17 (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the policy management authority is associated with a root entity.

18 (currently amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the approved authorization service is implemented within the context of a four-corner model comprising a root entity, a first participant, a customer of the first participant, a second participant, and a customer of the second participant.

19 (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1,~~ In a system comprising:  
a root entity, the root entity maintaining a root certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a first participant and a second participant, the root entity further maintaining a central repository;

the first participant maintaining a first certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a first customer;

the second participant maintaining a second certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a second customer;

a method for providing authorization services, comprising:  
generating by the second customer an authorization request to confirm the authority of an individual to act on behalf of the first customer;

transmitting the authorization request from the second customer to the second participant;  
transmitting the authorization request from the second participant to the first participant;  
retrieving at the first participant information concerning the authority of the individual to act on behalf of the first customer and one or more rules for responding to the authorization request;

generating by the first participant an authorization response using the retrieved information and rules;

transmitting the response from the first participant to the second participant; and  
transmitting the response from the second participant to the second customer;

wherein the first participant responds to the authorization request with a positive response only if the authorization request includes a purchase order signed by the individual.

20 (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1,~~ In a system comprising:

a root entity, the root entity maintaining a root certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a first participant and a second participant, the root entity further maintaining a central repository;

the first participant maintaining a first certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a first customer;

the second participant maintaining a second certification authority adapted to issue a digital certificate to a second customer;

a method for providing authorization services, comprising:

generating by the second customer an authorization request to confirm the authority of an individual to act on behalf of the first customer;

transmitting the authorization request from the second customer to the second participant;

transmitting the authorization request from the second participant to the first participant;

retrieving at the first participant information concerning the authority of the individual to act on behalf of the first customer and one or more rules for responding to the authorization request;

generating by the first participant an authorization response using the retrieved information and rules;

transmitting the response from the first participant to the second participant; and

transmitting the response from the second participant to the second customer;

wherein the first participant responds to the authorization request with a positive response only if the authorization request includes an offer to enter into a contract by the individual.